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AUTHOR Wilson, Wendy L.
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ABSTRACT

Problems faced by part-time faculty members are identified, and suggestions to avoid mistreatment of these teachers are offered. Disadvantages of part-time teaching include the lack of equitable pay and benefits. Since most institutions have a standard pay rate for part-timers, it is suggested that teaching excellence be recognized by creating teaching chairs for part-time faculty. Additional compensation could be paid from the institution's foundations or solicited from corporate sources. One incentive for part-timers is to suggest that they will be considered to full-time faculty openings. The separation of part-timers from their departments could be avoided by scheduling faculty and committee meetings at times part-timers might be able to attend. Another method of creating more cohesiveness between a department and its part-time faculty might be the use of a mentor system, where a full-time faculty member is assigned to each part-timer. Their function would be to act as a liaison, to explain informal rules and departmental business. In addition, orientation sessions for part-time faculty members could include an introduction to student support services. Providing office space and secretarial support would also be helpful to part-timers. A nine-item bibliography is included. (SW)

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THE USE AND ABUSE OF PART-TIME FACULTY: THE PART-TIMERS' POINT OF VIEW

by

Wendy L. Wilson
Miami University

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Much has been written on behalf of the part-time instructor. The understanding seems to be that the incidence of part-time faculty members will most surely increase. With this proposed expansion, the problems associated with the use of them will persist unless certain steps are taken.

Speaking as one of "them", I would like to address several of the problems part-timers face, and make some suggestions toward overcoming some of the mistreatment of part-time faculty. At the time most of this paper was conceived, I was a very busy part-timer, teaching 6 classes at 3 different universities. However, I've been fortunate to recently become a "real" faculty member. As a former adjunct who enjoyed it but enjoys full-time teaching a great deal more, I have a unique perspective from which to view the "uses and abuses" of my colleagues, the part-timers.

I would like to borrow from Smith (1980) to define part-time faculty: "All faculty who have a tenuous appointment and less than a reciprocal career commitment with the institution ... it is the psychological, not the economic, commitment between the person and the institution that makes a difference in their relationship." This would suggest that, although their motivations for accepting part-time positions may be varied, there are certain difficulties almost every part-timer faces by the very nature of their part-time status. Whether one is newly-degreed and desperately looking for a "foot in the door" to

full-time teaching, or someone who wishes to raise a family full-time but teaches a class to supplement his or her income, there are several shared concerns.

Putting those concerns aside for the moment, there are benefits to being part-time that shouldn't be ignored. There are the intrinsic rewards associated with teaching, contributing to human development, and being part of a university. There is potential growth opportunity, both personally and professionally. One part-time associate of mine, a high school teacher, says that college teaching gives her a new perspective on the kinds of material she should be teaching her high school students, and that teaching young adults is a refreshing change. Ideally, there is also the possibility of making valuable contacts for future employment. Finally, a major benefit is the lack of research requirements, student advising, committee requirements, etc. that leave some part-timers with extra time, depending on the extent of their commitments outside of the university. This time can be devoted to preparation towards making their classes the best they can be. There is, in fact, some evidence that part-timers may actually be more productive than full-timers in certain cases. (McDermid, 1979)

Though these advantages would seem to paint a rosy picture, the frustrations and problems part-timers face often result in disenchantment with the system. These concerns run the gamut from the lack of equitable pay and benefits to less tangible difficulties such as a sense of segregation from the deparment and a feeling of vulnerability. The resultant demoralization can't help but affect the quality of teaching, the students, and,

ultimately, the institution itself. I would, therefore, like to address the remainder of this paper to the problems part-timers, including myself, face and some of the possible solutions that can be implemented or at least attempted.

One of the items foremost in many of the papers on this subject is that of salary. It's a well-known fact that in most cases part-timers receive considerably less remuneration than their full-time colleagues. This is difficult, although not impossible, for most part-timers to accept. As part-timer Marianna Torgovnick (1982) put it, "Since all of us part-timers are out there begging for scraps, departments can teach their students cheaply, paying us next to nothing and providing no benefits ... department chairs are not forced to fight their administrations for more full-time slots." Most part-timers do seem to accept the fact that they will be paid less than the full-time faculty. However, Torgovnick continues, "we shouldn't accept other people's guilt ... departments are willing to exploit a pool of cheap labor, and full-time faculty let them." Regardless of whether or not they are accepted, the huge pay inequities are unfair and disheartening.

In these days of limited resources, suggesting that pay be raised to the same levels as those of full-time faculty is too simplistic a solution. However, an effort should be made to improve the monetary compensation, even at the cost of raises to full-time faculty. Some institutions attempt to allow small raises for part-timers with seniority and exemplary records, how-

ever most seem to have a standard pay rate which rarely changes. There have been some interesting suggestions offered, aside from an outright raise in pay, that I feel many part-timers would be pleased to see implemented.

One such suggestion is to recognize excellence by creating teaching chairs for part-time faculty. "Additional salary incentives for these positions could be paid from the institution's foundation or solicited from a community business related to the subject taught. Apointments could be made on a year-to-year basis, with competition for each appointment and with those gaining appointments winning recognition" (Pollack and Brender, 1982).

Another more controversial suggestion is proposed by Smith (1980). He recommends that grant support for graduate student support be redirected to part-time faculty support:

> "As the academy attempts to respond to the dual needs of part-timers (many of whom are products of over-productive graduate programs) and retain this country's commitment to academic-based research programs, the time may be to shift funding priorities in our departments and our research personnel practices. After all, these graduate programs continued to issue degrees to people prepared for narrow careers long after the market was saturated. These programs still have a responsibility to those people that predates its commitment to new or future graduate students."

Smith brings up an interesting point about graduate students. At one institution I was affiliated with, 80% of the part-time faculty were recent products of the department's own graduate school. This increased every year, as new M.A.s would finish their degrees and join the part-time faculty. It would seem that diverting some of the graduate student support into

support for the part-timers would help to break this vicious cycle.

The problem of inadequate monetary compensation brings up a less palpable frustration, that of incentive. The new part-timer who comes in full of determination and ambition can quickly become disillusioned by the minimal rewards offered for teaching excellence. There is a feeling that one could be the best teacher in the university or the worst and, as far as the university goes, the rewards would be the same: negligible. Recognition can be simple. I know many of my fellow part-timers were very gratified by a thank-you note sent out to each one of us by the department chair at the end of the term. However, one of the best incentives is the idea that the possibility of promotion from within exists.

While it should never be promised, the idea that proven part-time instructors will be considered favored candidates for any full-time positions which open up seems to be an excellent booster. Morale is improved because work is not only noticed, but appreciated and rewarded. At one of the institutions I was affiliated with, there is a visiting professor position which by design can only be held for a limited number of years at a time and is often filled by a part-timer. I noticed quite a surge in incentive, attendance at office hours, interest in teaching, etc. during the year this position opened up.

Another of the more nonmaterial areas in which part-timers are often thwarted is that of integration with their departments.

Ironically, one of the major benefits of being part-time is to feel a part of a university and to make contacts with other faculty members, yet very often part-timers find themselves excluded from their departments. Faculty meetings are scheduled at the full-time faculty's convenience; often no attempt is made to include part-timers. I came away from my first departmental meetings as a full-timer amazed at the amount of information disseminated and exchanged. This is information a part-timer would also benefit from, yet they are often lucky to receive minutes of what transpired at the meetings. In addition, part-timers may be able to offer insights to the department at these meetings. Many part-timers are actively involved in their communities, and can act as a link between community needs and university services. Part-timers often have a lot to offer but are rarely given the opportunity to do so.

The same is true of committees. Committees are generally made up of a cross-section of the faculty, but few allow for the inclusion of part-timers. This exclusion is particularly noticeable in committees which address concerns dealing with the basic courses, most often standardized, and most often largely taught by part-timers. As an example of work often done by committees, I'd like to cite text selection. In many departments, part-timers teach the bulk of the basic courses, which generally use one text for uniformity. While realizing the final decision will probably rest with a full-time faculty member, often a course director or area head, part-timer input can only help. In my own experience, I've seen part-timers who

felt powerless to defend a text from a student challenge, having no knowledge of the reasons this text was chosen in the first place. A part-timer can often be valuable as an interpreter of student criticism and/or praise of a text if consulted. While I realize that many part-timers may not have the time or the inclination to serve on a textbook selection committee, some will and should be given that opportunity.

Another method of creating more cohesiveness between a department and its part-time faculty might be the use of a mentor or "buddy" system, where a full-time faculty member is assigned to each part-timer. Their function would not be to supervise, or to imply superiority on the part of the full-timer, but to act as a liason. So much of the socialization process depends on informal rules the part-timer has no opportunity to learn. The mentor could be there to explain these rules, to share resources (such as course syllabi and exercises), to offer informal and/or formal teaching evaluations, and to keep the part-timer informed of pertinent departmental business. This would work best on an individual basis, as part-timers are a diverse group, and some would need and desire more contact than others.

A mentor system should not replace a more formal orientation program. At institutions I've taught at, orientation for new part-timers ranged from a very formal university orientation (with no departmental orientation) to an informal workshop-type departmental orientation (with no orientation to the unviersity) to no orientation whatsoever. An orientation may not be easy to schedule, but most part-timers I talked to said they would value

the opportunity to participate. In one case, an administrator was persuaded to invite part-timers to the main faculty orientation. His initial protest that none of them would attend without remuneration was disproved when over 80% of them came to an afternoon orientation session (Cottingham, et. al., 1981). An evening orientation I attended bettered these findings, with approximately 85% of the part-timers attending. Part-timers who are truly committed to their positions, as a great many are, are often appreciative of the chance to learn information that will help them to be more effective in these positions.

At the least, these orientations should include an introduction to student support services. Many times, especially in the community colleges, part-time faculty are the only contact part-time students have with the institutions. I don't believe many of my fellow part-timers knew enough about the availability of learning resource centers, media centers, counseling services, student organizations, etc. to know where to refer a student in need of aid. At best, an orientation can be keyed to local needs and specific department and course requirements. In any case, some effort needs to be made to acquaint the part-timer with the university and the department. A common exclamation heard around my former part-time office was, "Hey, did you know about ____"? - a haphazard method of disseminating important information.

Finally, I'd like to address a few of the logistical concerns. Although it may seem like a relatively unimportant matter, I can't stress enough the need to provide some kind of

office space. There is little enough incentive to spend time on campus outside of class without exacerbating the problem by not having an office to have office hours in. Many of the part-timers I talked to said the major complaint students had about them as teachers was their unavailability outside of class. I used to consider my car as a "mobile office" as I drove from campus to campus, and in several places it was the only office I had.

In addition, there is the matter of secretarial or work-study support. Part-timers often have to type their own exams, duplicate their own materials, pay for their own transparencies, etc., often with less-than-desirable results. I recall frantically cutting and pasting and generally making a mess out of an exam once because there simply wasn't enough time for re-typing it by my hunt-and-peck method. Again, it is the student who suffers from receiving poor copies and illegible exams. I agree that full-timers should probably get priority, but some attempt should be made to accommodate part-timers as well.

In summation, I think the major ill effect on those who teach part-time is a sense that we don't count and a feeling of invisibility. One part-timer told me, only half-jokingly, that the department chair saw her "hanging around" frequently and assumed she was the cleaning lady. The disillusion that sets in does not only hurt the part-timer, but the students as well, and ultimately, the institution. More effort and resources need to be expended to bring part-timers into the department and make them feel like contributing faculty members, rather than members of an insignificant, expendable labor pool.

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